

Costa: Our Food Safety Laws Have Not Had Reform In More Than Fifty Years

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Yesterday, the House of Representatives passed HR 2749, the Food Safety Enhancement Act by a bipartisan vote of 283-142. Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) supported the legislation, and was deeply involved in crafting the legislation. The legislation provides several long-overdue changes to our nation's food safety network to continue to provide the world's safest food to Americans.

"Today's passage of the Food Safety Enhancement Act is a good first step in modernizing our food safety system. This is still a work in progress, but this progress is long overdue," Costa said. "While American food still continues to be among the safest in the world, it is not surprising that recent food safety problems have caused Americans to lose confidence in our nation's ability to keep our food safe. We lack an effective risk-based system which ensures the best management practices and facilitates a strong relationship between federal and state agencies to better prevent and control food safety threats at all levels of food production."

Earlier in the year, Costa introduced the Safe FEAST Act, which would establish new food safety requirements for domestically produced and imported food to identify and prevent potential sources of food-borne illness. Many provisions in Costa's bill were included in the final version of HR 2749 such as risk-based safety standards for certain raw commodities. Mr. Costa was also instrumental in negotiating several changes to the bill based on concerns raised by the agriculture community, including changes to provisions on traceability, quarantine, records access as well as additional provisions to protect farms.

The bill mandates that FDA establish a risk-based system for inspecting food facilities. It also requires all imported foods to meet U.S. safety standards and directs food manufacturing companies to implement a food safety plan to control hazards.

"We establish science-based, risk-based standards for producers and processors both domestically and abroad- to make our food safer. This means ensuring our foreign partners - whether they are growing leafy greens or peppers or producing peanut butter or pot pie - are also meeting the highest safety standards before their products make their way to American tables," Costa added.

